

# MILLERTON LAKE

Draft Resource Management Plan / General Plan  
Environmental Impact Statement / Environmental Impact Report

June 2008



United States Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Mid-Pacific Region  
South-Central California Office

**RECLAMATION**  
*Managing Water in the West*

California Department of Parks & Recreation  
Central Valley District



## **MISSION STATEMENTS**

### **DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**

The Mission of the Department of the Interior is to protect and provide access to our Nation's natural and cultural heritage and honor our trust responsibilities to Indian Tribes and our commitments to island communities.

### **BUREAU OF RECLAMATION**

The mission of the Bureau of Reclamation is to manage, develop, and protect water and related resources in an environmentally and economically sound manner in the interest of the American public.

### **CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PARKS & RECREATION**

To provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.

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**CONTRACT NUMBER: 01CS20210H**

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*Prepared by*

**United States Department of the Interior  
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# MILLERTON LAKE

## **Draft Resource Management Plan / General Plan Environmental Impact Statement / Environmental Impact Report**

*Prepared by*

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Bureau of Reclamation  
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June 2008



The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), in cooperation with the California Department of Parks and Recreation (State Parks), is developing the Millerton Lake Resource Management Plan (RMP) and General Plan (GP) to establish management objectives, guidelines, and actions for the Millerton Lake State Recreation Area (Plan Area). Millerton Lake is located in the southern portion of California's Central Valley in Fresno and Madera Counties in the upper San Joaquin River Watershed. Millerton Lake and the majority of adjacent lands comprising the Plan Area are owned by Reclamation. State Parks (managing partner) manages the entire Plan Area through agreements with Reclamation and the California Department of Fish and Game. In a cooperative effort between Reclamation and State Parks, a joint RMP and GP is being developed in an effort to manage this area as a whole. The RMP under federal guidelines and GP under state guidelines are similar in that they are both long-term planning documents designed to guide future management actions. This joint plan has been developed and combined in this volume with an Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

On November 1, 1957, Reclamation entered into a 50-year lease with the State of California through its State Park and Recreation Commission for the purpose of developing, administering, and maintaining the public lands around Millerton Lake as part of the California State Parks system. The agreement stipulated that the occupancy, control, and administration of the park were subject to use by Reclamation and other Central Valley Project (CVP) purposes pursuant to the federal reclamation laws. This agreement allows for recreation that is consistent with the primary purpose of the project for water supply.

The most recent GP for the Plan Area was completed by State Parks in 1983. This plan projected recreation trends and deficiencies through 1990. Since the adoption of this plan, several changes in the physical and regulatory environment have indicated the need for an updated plan. The new joint RMP/GP will have a planning horizon through the year 2035. The new plan will address the following needs:

- Enhancing natural resources and recreational opportunities without interruption of reservoir operations
- Providing recreational opportunities to meet the demands of a growing, diverse population
- Ensuring recreational diversity and quality
- Protecting natural, cultural, and recreational resources, and providing resource education opportunities and good stewardship
- Providing updated management considerations for establishing a new management agreement with the State of California.

Like the GP, the RMP is a long-term plan that will guide future actions in the Plan Area and is based on a comprehensive inventory of environmental resources and facilities and input from local, state, and federal agencies, and the general public. The primary emphasis of the RMP is to protect water quality, water supply, and natural resources, while enhancing recreational uses in the Plan Area. The development of the RMP is based upon authorities provided by Congress through the Reclamation Act, Federal Water Project Recreation Act, Reclamation Recreation Management Act, and applicable federal agency and United States Department of the Interior policies.

The purpose of the RMP/GP is to provide a program and set of policy guidelines necessary to encourage orderly use, development, and management of the surrounding lands. The RMP/GP will provide outdoor recreational opportunities, enhanced by Millerton Lake and its shoreline, compatible with the surrounding scenic, environmental, and cultural resources. In addition, the RMP/GP will propose uses that will be compatible with the obligation to operate the reservoir for delivery of high-quality water.

The planning process for RMP/GP involves the integration of issues, opportunities and constraints; management actions; and management zones. It follows the guidance of federal and state planning mandates and proposed actions that balance recreation opportunities with natural and cultural resource stewardship. The following are the basic elements of the planning process:

- Define the overall goals and objectives
- Describe the resource categories that group the issues
- Identify the issues, opportunities, and constraints
- Determine management actions to address the issues
- Define the management zones for Millerton Lake.

The environmental impacts of the RMP/GP are assessed in a programmatic EIS/EIR that is included as part of this document. The environmental review focuses on the potential for management actions to cause adverse or beneficial environmental impacts to natural and cultural resources such as water quality, endangered species, and historic resources.

The four planning alternatives described in Section 2 were formulated to address the issues, opportunities, and constraints in the Plan Area. The No Action Alternative and three action alternatives are as follows:

- No Action—This alternative manages land and activities with the continuation of current management practice.
- Recreation Expansion (Alternative 1)—This alternative emphasizes expanded recreation opportunities.
- Enhancement (Alternative 2)—This alternative balances natural resource protection and recreation opportunities.
- Resource Protection/Limited Enhancement (Alternative 3) – This alternative emphasizes conservation and protection of natural and cultural resources while providing visitor experiences consistent with the emphasis on resource stewardship.

Under the No Action Alternative, current resource and recreation management direction and practices at Millerton Lake would continue unchanged. However, the managing partner would implement the infrastructure improvements that are common to all the alternatives. It provides the benchmark for making comparisons in the EIR/EIS between possible future changes under Alternatives 1, 2, and 3.

Alternative 1 would expand recreational uses and public access by implementing new or modified land and recreation management practices. This alternative is included to demonstrate a scenario in which recreational uses are substantially expanded while meeting the RMP/GP goals

for protection of natural resources to the extent feasible. The concept of the Recreation Expansion Alternative would be:

- Expansion of recreation facilities to include the highest levels of camping facilities (group and individual), additional boat ramps, and a new, expanded, or improved marina.
- Manage for the highest boat densities and the least restrictions on boat type and speed.

The objective of Alternative 2 is to enhance current recreational uses and public access at Millerton Lake in order to attract more visitors and increase recreational opportunities, while protecting natural resources with new or modified land and recreation management practices. These activities propose upgrades and improvements for many of the Park's existing facilities and utilities. The concept of the Enhancement Alternative would be:

- Lower boat densities than Alternative 1 but higher than Alternative 3; more restriction of boat speeds than Alternative 1 and restrictions on use of personal watercraft.
- Development of new recreation opportunities and facilities, e.g., trails, marina expansion, group and individual campsites, in a manner that is balanced with resource protection.

The management approach for Alternative 3 emphasizes conservation and protection of natural and cultural resources while providing visitor experiences with this high degree of emphasis on resource stewardship. The concept of the Resource Protection/Limited Enhancement Alternative would be:

- Emphasis on relocation of facilities away from sensitive resource areas, and upgrade of recreation facilities consistent with resource protection.
- Management of the areas upstream of the main lake body as semi-primitive.
- Manage for the lowest boat densities and most restrictions on boat speed and type.
- No expansion of the existing marina.
- No appreciable increases in group or individual campsites.

Section 3, Existing Conditions, describes features that could be affected by the alternatives. Other topics such as climate and air quality are addressed to provide context, but less detail is provided because impacts to these resources would be less noticeable.

Much of the data collected for the description of the existing environment are included in GIS format. Many figures show areas with sensitive resources, such as biology and land use, or areas characterized by hazard potential, such as erosion and geological hazards. These figures and the impact analyses provided in Section 4 would be the basis of constraint analysis that would guide any plans for future development within the planning horizon.

Section 4, Environmental Consequences, describes the impact of implementing each of the action alternatives as well as the No Action Alternative. Future actions that might result in site-specific impacts will be addressed in project-specific plans and environmental documentation as they arise. Where possible, avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures are provided to reduce the severity of each impact.

Before presentation of the impacts, impact thresholds are identified and, where applicable, impact methodology is also discussed. Thresholds are expressed in the following categories:

- **Beneficial Impact:** This impact would occur when an activity could result in the elimination, reduction, or resolution of a conflict.
- **No Impact:** This impact would occur if an activity would result in no change compared to the existing condition.
- **Minor Adverse Impact:** This impact would occur if an activity would result in a detectable impact that would lead to deterioration or a conflict. It is equivalent to a less-than-significant impact under CEQA.
- **Major Adverse Impact:** This impact would occur if an activity would result in a dramatic deterioration or a severe conflict. A major adverse impact can be long-term and substantial. It is equivalent to a significant impact under CEQA.

Section 4 then discusses the impacts of actions common to all alternatives, impacts unique to each alternative, a summary of impacts, and mitigation measures, if applicable. Cumulative impacts are discussed at the end of each resource topic where applicable.

The impacts of each alternative are summarized in Table S-1. The Millerton Lake RMP/GP is a program document and, therefore, not site-specific. If and when site-specific projects are funded, site-specific supplemental environmental documents would be required before approval.

**Table S-1  
Impacts Summary**

Impacts to Resources	No Action	Alternative 1		Alternative 2		Alternative 3	
	Impact Magnitude	Impact Magnitude	Impact After Mit.	Impact Magnitude	Impact After Mit.	Impact Magnitude	Impact After Mit.
<b>WATER RESOURCES</b>							
WQ-1: Pollutants due to motorized vehicle emissions	Major	Minor	No Impact	Minor	No Impact	Beneficial	Beneficial
WQ-2: Erosion and temporary turbidity due to construction, maintenance, and use of facilities, roads, and trails	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor
WQ-3: Pollutants from new portable restrooms/vault toilets not pumped/cleaned properly	Minor	Minor	No Impact	Minor	No Impact	Minor	No Impact
<b>AIR QUALITY</b>							
AQ-1: Vehicle emissions from auto and boat traffic	Minor	Minor	No Mitigation	Minor	No Mitigation	Minor	No Mitigation



**Table S-1  
Impacts Summary**

Impacts to Resources	No Action	Alternative 1		Alternative 2		Alternative 3	
	Impact Magnitude	Impact Magnitude	Impact After Mit.	Impact Magnitude	Impact After Mit.	Impact Magnitude	Impact After Mit.
AQ-2: Dust from vehicle traffic on unpaved areas and site maintenance and facilities construction with ground disturbing activities that generate dust	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor
AQ-3: Combustion emissions from accidental or prescribed fires	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor
<b>SOILS AND GEOLOGY</b>							
SG-1: Ground disturbing construction and maintenance activities	Minor	Minor	No Impact	Minor	No Impact	Minor	No Impact
SG-2: Erosion compaction and disturbance due to trail use and construction	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor
SG-3: Compaction and erosion due to cattle grazing	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor
<b>BIOLOGY</b>							
BI-1: Expansion of recreation and camping facilities impacting biological resources	No Impact	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor
BI-2: Expansion of camping facilities at Temperance Flat and increased visitor access could impact vegetation and special status species	No Impact	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	No Impact	No Impact

**Table S-1  
Impacts Summary**

Impacts to Resources	No Action	Alternative 1		Alternative 2		Alternative 3	
	Impact Magnitude	Impact Magnitude	Impact After Mit.	Impact Magnitude	Impact After Mit.	Impact Magnitude	Impact After Mit.
BI-3: Expansion of the trail system proposed by Alternatives 1 & 2 & 3 could adversely impact vegetation, wildlife, and special status species	No Impact	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor
BI-4: Motorized vessel emissions may reach high concentrations in localized areas and result in major adverse impacts to fisheries and aquatic communities	Major	Major	Minor	Major	Minor	Minor	Minor
BI-5: Implementation of vegetation, fire, and fisheries plans	Minor	Beneficial	No Mitigation	Beneficial	No Mitigation	Beneficial	No Mitigation
<b>CULTURAL RESOURCES</b>							
CU-1: Construction of proposed facilities (i.e., ground disturbing activities) and increased visitor activity due to new trails and camp sites will expose archaeological sites	Major	Major to Minor	Minor	Major to Minor	Minor	Major to Minor	Minor
<b>VISUAL RESOURCES</b>							
VR-1: Smoke from prescribed burns impacting visual resources	Minor	Minor	No Mitigation	Minor	No Mitigation	Minor	No Mitigation
VR-2: Increase in boat densities in no action alternative and alternative 1 & 2	Minor	Minor	No Mitigation	Minor	No Mitigation	No Impact	No Impact

**Table S-1  
Impacts Summary**

Impacts to Resources	No Action	Alternative 1		Alternative 2		Alternative 3	
	Impact Magnitude	Impact Magnitude	Impact After Mit.	Impact Magnitude	Impact After Mit.	Impact Magnitude	Impact After Mit.
VR-3: Lower boat densities in the upper lake under alternative 3	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Beneficial	Beneficial
VR-4: New facilities	No Impact	Minor	No Mitigation	Minor	No Mitigation	Minor	No Mitigation
VR-5: Acquisition, easements, or mitigation measures on adjacent lands.	N/A	Beneficial	N/A	Beneficial	N/A	Beneficial	N/A
<b>LAND USE</b>							
LU-1: Prescribed burning	Minor	Minor	No Mitigation	Minor	No Mitigation	Minor	No Mitigation
LU-2: Expansion of hunting activities	No Impact	Minor	No Mitigation	Minor	No Mitigation	No Impact	No Mitigation
LU-3: Addition of primitive campsites	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Beneficial	N/A
LU-4: Working with conservation groups outside of the plan area to establish land uses similar to within the plan area	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Beneficial	N/A
<b>RECREATION</b>							
R-1: Temporary construction activities at camping and recreation facilities	N/A	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor
R-2: Management of BAOT levels resulting in decreased recreational opportunities	Major	No Impact	No Mitigation	Minor	Minor	Major	Minor
R-3: Management of BAOT levels affecting the quality of recreational boating experience	Major	Major	Major	Beneficial	No Mitigation	Beneficial	No Mitigation

**Table S-1  
Impacts Summary**

Impacts to Resources	No Action	Alternative 1		Alternative 2		Alternative 3	
	Impact Magnitude	Impact Magnitude	Impact After Mit.	Impact Magnitude	Impact After Mit.	Impact Magnitude	Impact After Mit.
R-4: Conflicts on trails	Major	Minor	Minor	Major	Minor	Major	Minor
R-5: Enforcement of boat speed	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor
R-6: Discourage boat flotillas at Temperance Flat	Major	Beneficial	N/A	Beneficial	N/A	Beneficial	N/A
<b>VISITOR ACCESS AND CIRCULATION</b>							
TR-1: Visitor access or circulation related to parking and roadway improvements.	Major	No Impact	None	No Impact	None	No Impact	None
TR-2: Visitor access and circulation related to trail improvements.	Major	Beneficial	N/A	Beneficial	N/A	Beneficial	N/A
TR-3: Visitor access related to trail management plan.	Major	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor
TR-4: Visitor circulation related to trail management plan.	Major	Beneficial	N/A	Beneficial	N/A	Beneficial	N/A